

# Collaborative Recruitment of Diverse Teachers for the Long Haul—TEAMS: Teacher Education for the Advancement of a Multicultural Society

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The recruitment of qualified teachers is an immense and demanding job, particularly for high-poverty urban schools. Urban schools often turn to the common practice of recruiting teachers who are under-qualified, most of them with no teaching experience and limited training. Because of their lack of preparation, coupled with the difficult working conditions they face and the inadequate support within their schools, these beginning teachers are likely to leave the profession soon after they enter. The attrition data is challenging: 33% of beginning teachers leave within the first three years of teaching, and almost 50% leave within five years. This attrition in turn produces yet more recruitment, again of a new group of under-prepared teachers, creating a "revolving door" phenomenon that has come to characterize the teaching profession. Thus, students in high-poverty schools often see new, under-prepared teachers year after year, despite the fact that these very students are in most need of quality, experienced teachers. These students are denied the opportunity to learn from well-prepared, committed teachers who are in the profession for the long haul.

The TEAMS (Teacher Education for the Advancement of a Multicultural Society) Teaching Fellowship Program is a collaborative model of positive recruitment that prepares diverse teachers, paraprofessionals, and counselors for service in urban, public school with the goal of increasing the academic success of all students. The

TEAMS Program has evolved a unique model that provides a winning situation for all who are involved by using creative partnering to recruit, prepare, and support a confident, critical, and diverse teaching force prepared to tackle the challenges of inner-city teaching for the long haul.

## Background

*TEAMS has provided a network of teachers, like-minded educators, and resources for a diverse group of professionals who are attempting to create change in today's school system. TEAMS not only provides critical financial support for honorable work going on in the classroom, but helps teachers reach out to each other to receive the learning that they need to become better equipped to serve their students. Without the commitment of programs such as TEAMS, educators such as me would not be able to network and develop as effectively as leaders of social change and diversity.*

— Angela Devencenzi

For over eight years, TEAMS has implemented a model of teacher development that attempts to defy these disheartening recruitment and attrition rates by annually enrolling more than 400 teachers along the West Coast in the program. The program model rests on the assumption that by providing financial support to acquire a teaching credential, focusing training activities on diversity, multiculturalism, and effective teaching strategies for urban schools, developing a network of like-minded educators, and intentionally targeting communities of color for recruitment, a diverse group of capable teachers committed to a career in public school teaching will emerge.

Our unique collaboration of higher education institutions, K-12 public school districts, and community-based organizations is led by the University of San Fran-

cisco (USF). We seek to develop a highly qualified teaching force that is reflective of the racial and ethnic diversity of students in urban K-12 schools up and down the West Coast, with a particular focus in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Seattle-Tacoma metropolitan areas.

Established in 1998 by the USF School of Education, the Multicultural Alliance, and several K-12 schools, TEAMS was created to address the critical shortage of teachers of color in San Francisco Bay Area urban schools. After the closure of the Multicultural Alliance in 2000, USF assumed a leadership role in TEAMS by becoming its fiscal agent and host institution. Creatively leveraging the resources that each of our partners brings to the collaborative, the program has been able to provide this unique combination of financial, educational, career, and professional development support to over 3000 aspiring and new teachers during its existence.

We are primarily funded by AmeriCorps, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service. This AmeriCorps funding is the most significant way we are able to provide financial support for new teachers. Each year we receive an operating grant along with 400 AmeriCorps Education Award slots for Fellows. Fellows earn an education award of \$4,725 each year for two years to use towards their teacher education by serving in an urban public school as a teacher of record, paraprofessional educator, or counselor.

## Seeking Diversity in Teacher Recruitment

It is apparent that the increasingly diverse student population in urban public schools requires not only teachers who are credentialed, but also those who reflect

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the racial and ethnic diversity. Currently, students of color make up one third of our nation's schools while people of color comprise only 13% of the teaching force. In urban schools, students of color make up 75% of the student body while people of color represent only 36% of the teaching force. Furthermore, the increase in students of color is expected to continue at a significant rate. Nationally, predictions put the numbers of students of color at half of the student population by 2020<sup>1</sup> while the percentage of teachers of color is not expected to increase.<sup>2</sup>

We in TEAMS have always believed and insisted that any discussion on teacher quality must necessarily include a focus on teacher diversity if the racial achievement gap and growing student diversity is to be addressed in a meaningful way. In the "Assessment of Diversity in America's Teaching Force: A Call to Action," the National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force points out that "although teacher quality has been accepted and internalized as a mantra for school reform, the imperative for diversity is often marginalized rather than accepted as central to the quality equation in teaching." One of the key findings of the study is that "students of color tend to have higher academic, personal, and social performance when taught by teachers from their own ethnic groups." Furthermore, the study found that the academic achievement of students of color increased significantly when taught by teachers using culturally responsive strategies.

#### ***Breaking Down Financial Barriers***

TEAMS was developed to intentionally and systematically address diversity in its recruitment process by targeting communities of color and reducing the financial and access barriers that commonly face candidates of color. The AmeriCorps Education Award provides an incentive for each stakeholder in the recruitment process. For potential teachers, it provides financial support for the educational costs of pursuing and attaining their teaching credentials as well as an incentive to work in urban schools and serve the community.

TEAMS Partners in Education—both teacher education programs and urban school districts—also have an incentive to recruit members to the program, thereby providing the individual advisement and referrals needed to attract TEAMS applicants. The Education Award provides teacher education programs with the

means to offer an alternative source of financial aid to prospective candidates, which helps recruitment efforts, particularly among people of color. For urban school districts, which are already employing non-credentialed teachers to meet their immediate needs, both the program components and its education award are a means to improve the quality and preparation of their non-credentialed teachers and to support career-ladder programs for paraprofessional educators.

We have also been fortunate in using the Education Awards as leverage to get some of our higher education partners to provide matching funds in the form of scholarships to Fellows enrolled in their teacher education programs. Other forms of financial support we have been able to provide for Fellows include a housing subsidy, funded by the Teachers' Housing Cooperative of San Francisco, and in past years, mini-grants for service-learning projects. In a recent survey of Fellows completing the program, a majority (63%) responded that the financial support offered by the Program was the top reason why they joined and over 70% pointed to it as a very important factor in their development as a teacher. As voiced by one participant, TEAMS "was the only way for me to pay for my continuing educational goals."

#### ***Outreach and Credentialing***

Outreach is critical to recruit the diverse population we support, including those who might not necessarily see themselves reflected in the teaching profession or might not think they have the means to do it. Many of the candidates we recruit are people of color, first generation college students, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and/or people moving into teaching from other careers (including para-educators who seek to advance their career). We rely heavily on personal connections and relationships for this recruitment. It is surprising how successful Fellows are in recruiting other teachers by simply sharing with them their experience in TEAMS. Other recruitment methods include referrals from partner institutions, holding of informational sessions, and participation in career and graduate school fairs.

For candidates who have considered teaching as a profession, but have not pursued it because of a lack of understanding about the process or lack of financial capacity to afford teacher credentialing, our recruitment information focuses more

on the different teacher education institutions that TEAMS partners with, thereby offering a variety of locations for potential Fellows to pursue their credential, the financial incentives available, and information on the steps to become licensed.

Each year, about 70% of the Fellows who participate are people of color. One higher education partner not only tripled the diversity in its program, but also doubled its teacher education enrollment in the first year of partnership with TEAMS. It is important to note that we do not see recruitment and development efforts as separate from one another. Candidates must be enrolled in one of our partner credential programs and must be placed in an urban public school before being officially accepted into the program. Thus, academic coursework, practical experience, and the additional training and support are what we offer to prepare teachers for a long-term career in the teaching field.

#### **Teacher Preparation and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Our primary pedagogy encourages Fellows to be educational leaders by helping them to understand the impact that teachers have in the classroom, in the school, and in the community. Also, by understanding the impact of policies and other external factors on the ability of teachers to be effective, Fellows are motivated to act as change agents in educational reform. Overall, the purpose is not just to develop the teacher, but also to help the teacher become more effective in developing diverse students in urban schools.

#### ***Methodology: Providing the Missing Link***

TEAMS utilizes four specific methods to prepare teachers: (1) Enrollment in a credential program; (2) Service as a teacher or school counselor; (3) Attendance at pedagogical seminars; and (4) Completion of a service-learning project. We recognize that teaching service provides important practical training for new teachers, particularly when that service occurs while teachers are also gaining academic preparation. Thus, Fellows receive both the preparation offered by the teacher education program and the experience of working in an urban public school.

Below, we describe the professional development training opportunities provided by TEAMS, in particular, the pedagogical seminars, the family network, the service-learning projects, and the Cesar Chavez

Service and Leadership Initiative. Through pedagogical seminars and service-learning projects, key components are offered that are often “missing links” for new teachers in urban schools.

### Pedagogical Seminars

The TEAMS pedagogical seminars are designed to help Fellows build teaching skills, address critical issues in urban education, and network with peers and experts in the field. Topics addressed in the pedagogical seminars vary from year to year, but always retain a focus on multiculturalism, social justice, and youth empowerment while exploring teaching strategies that have been effective in diverse, urban classrooms.

Examples of previous seminar themes include: “Critical Curriculum Planning,” “Moral Commitment and Ethical Action in the Classroom,” “Building Diversity in Public Education,” “Teachers as Visionaries and Change Agents,” “Culturally Responsive Pedagogy,” and “Transforming Hearts, Minds, and Society in a Standards-Based, High Stakes Climate,” among others. At each seminar, a practitioner, researcher/scholar, teaching veteran, or educational leader is invited to address the group and the theme.

Each seminar incorporates an aspect of four areas: network, theory, practice, and motivation. The seminars provide opportunities for Fellows to interact with other new teachers and with experienced teachers. Presentations, discussions, and small group work provide opportunities to exchange ideas and develop relationships.

### Service-Learning

*The TEAMS program in a large sense kept me in the teaching profession. The service-learning project has enabled me to work with students in a building a community. It has been essential in keeping me more focused on real teaching. It has enhanced my teaching of Pre-Algebra and Science because I can link it to the community.*

—Dante Ruiz

In addition to attending the seminars, each Fellow is required to complete at least one service-learning project per year with his or her students. Through the pedagogical seminars, Fellows learn about the *Youth Empowerment Model* of service-learning. Examples of actual projects implemented by Fellows in the past are presented so Fellows can see how the project impacted the classroom, school, community, and student learning. Service-

learning projects help Fellows develop practical skills in building community in the classroom, collaboration with other community members, and creative approaches to curriculum development.

The service-learning projects often become the highlight of the Fellows’ experience, many of them receiving local and even national recognition. It is not surprising that a majority of Fellows have reported that the service-learning training they received and the project they undertook were a positive transformative process for them as teachers and also for their students. As echoed by one Fellow,

TEAMS gave me real world experience with service-learning projects that I otherwise would not have had. Me and another Fellow took the students out of the classroom and into their community to try and teach them about community responsibility and pride. I believe that this out-of-class curriculum was more beneficial than anything that could have been accomplished with a book in a classroom.

The following are two examples of community action projects that took place in the San Francisco Bay Area:

*A Public Health Campaign:* Wendy Ginsburg, a Fellow from 2004-2006, worked with her students to educate families in the Mission District of San Francisco about the dangers of a popular candy that contained lead. This candy was widely sold in stores around the neighborhood. Wendy decided to do her service-learning project in her 5<sup>th</sup> grade math class, where she wanted students to be able to compare, analyze, and interpret different data sets (math standard 1.0). The students did candy consumption surveys, tallied the data, created charts, and formulated conclusions based on their data. In addition, Wendy arranged a partnership with the local Department of Public Health (DPH) to help students learn more about the effects of lead, and also to gain access to educational materials that the DPH had on the topic.

Armed with their new knowledge, the students decided to do an educational campaign, which included presentations to the school, talking to merchants in the neighborhood to urge them to stop selling the lead-tainted candy, and making fliers and posters warning about the dangers of the candy. Wendy was able to get through her academic content by this very creative process, one that engaged the students in a “real-world” situation and in service to others. Their project gained them a spot on the local news and in the newspaper.

*A Youth-Friendly Resource Guide:* Another Fellow described how her service-learning project in publishing a youth-friendly resource guide to San Francisco enabled her students to impact their community through research, reflection and creative expression:

Impact High students were engaged in a community building research project that brought them together as a group of teenagers in the juvenile justice system to look at the issues that contributed to their contact with the system. My students came to the conclusion in their research that one of the main issues that drives students into the system is a lack of resources. Out of this came the idea to create a youth-friendly resource guide for San Francisco youth.

In this way students were able to strengthen their own sense of community, develop their resourcefulness while researching what services exist for youth in San Francisco, publish their writing as a way to get their voices and perspectives that have been historically marginalized heard, and learn about what it takes to publish a magazine. The service activity was based in writing and research so it furthered my curricular goals for my writing workshop class. Writing for an authentic audience and knowing that their writing would be published pushed otherwise unmotivated students to draft and be thoughtful about their poetry and prose.

The students completed the magazine, which was a compilation of student poetry and other writing and a guide to resources and services available to youth in the San Francisco area ranging from employment to health. A community publishing event was held where students provided a poetry performance and food to the community as a way to distribute their resource guide. The magazine was impressive and the students came away with a great sense of accomplishment knowing that their work truly made a significant impact on their peers and community.

Both of these projects illustrate the youth empowerment approach (YEA) to service-learning that we adopted and implemented which evolved from a partnership with REAL (Revitalizing Education and Learning), a community-based organization involved in youth development. The YEA model involves students in a problem posing, creative planning, action, reflection cycle that encourages intelligent engagement with social problems and mirrors Paulo Freire’s concept of praxis. Through service-learning projects, students are engaged in their own learning process while contributing to their schools, the families their schools serve, and the broader community beyond their





Students participate in a service-learning project that became a public health campaign to get lead-laced candy off the shelves of stores in the Mission District of San Francisco.



—Photographs provided by Wendy Ginsburg

schools. Fellows are encouraged and provided with resources to work with other Fellows, other teachers in their schools, parents, and community agencies to plan and implement the service projects.

### *The Cesar Chavez Leadership and Service Initiative*

The Cesar Chavez Leadership and Service Initiative is an optional program for TEAMS Fellows in California to implement a project specific to the United Farm Workers labor leader Cesar Chavez, in addition to or to meet their service-learning requirement. Fellows receive resources and training that highlights his life and work. It is another example of the youth empowerment model of service-learning.

Service-learning projects based on this initiative begin with a study on the life and work of Chavez, the social struggles he was engaged in, and a consideration of how those struggles manifest in the communities students live in today. TEAMS Fellows and curriculum consultants share lesson plans on Chavez that meet content standards for various grade levels.

The process engages students by having them identify community needs and how they will address problems through their service. It works to build community in the classroom as students dialogue, brainstorm, and work as a team to reach consensus. Fellows utilize interdisciplinary approaches to experiential learning, such as social studies and history for the Chavez lesson, math and science for students to study the chosen problem and assess results, and writing for the after-service reflection.

In years past, the initiative culminated in the Cesar Chavez Conference on Service and Leadership for middle and high school students in the San Francisco Bay Area who have been involved in service learning. Held at USF, 100 middle and high school students participated in an all-day conference of workshops and mural-making that depicted the ten values of Cesar Chavez. The murals that were created went beyond our expectations. The students not only conceptualized the content and design, they also created the actual murals, which turned out to be stunning pieces of art. The murals were mobile, designed to travel to different schools to raise awareness about Chavez, the impact of the labor movement he led, and to serve as an example of student work.

There were other significant outcomes from the Conference, most notably,

the high school students, many of whom had not been to a college campus before, had their interest piqued because of their experience with their college student hosts that day, and asked numerous questions about how to get in to college (USF specifically, but also college in general). Of equal significance, the USF college students (students of color from a multicultural on-campus group called FACES) who had volunteered as hosts to the high school students reported that the experience inspired them to work with young people in the future.

### Teacher Support

*Teachers need programs like this to continue motivating themselves while receiving financial support. So many things prevent people from entering and staying in the education field, I feel TEAMS bridges this gap and gives so many people the opportunity to become and stay an educator.*

—Renata Elmore

Support for teacher development is tied to recruitment, preparation and development, and long-term retention. Newly hired, inexperienced teachers who do not receive induction and mentoring are more than twice as likely to leave their position after the first year, and a higher percentage leave the teaching field entirely as opposed to moving to another position. Among the key reasons teachers leave the profession, lack of support and a poor working environment are factors that are often cited.

Not surprisingly, the support that we generate through seminars and a support network are important factors in TEAMS Fellows' decisions to stay in teaching:

*This program was a tremendously helpful teacher education and teacher support program. I had the support of the TEAMS staff, fellow teachers, and all the leaders and presenters. This program helps teachers who teach in urban schools. We felt respected and we all realized that we were all struggling with the same things. The program helps us learn how to be more effective with our schools, students, and families. My teaching has been greatly affected and I am a better teacher for it.*

### Families

Fellows are grouped into "families" that meet consistently throughout the program year. Families are organized by grade level, subject area, or teaching specialty (Special Education, Bilingual Education). Within families, Fellows develop deeper relationships with a smaller group of teachers who share a similar teaching context.

A family leader who is a veteran teacher, current practitioner, and/or teacher educator facilitates each family group. The program has engaged TEAMS alumni in the role of family leader as well.

Within their families, Fellows build community, discuss issues brought up in the seminars, share best practices and resources, and troubleshoot problems. Families are encouraged to communicate with and support each other outside of the seminars. Some families use their network to visit each other's classroom, exchange lesson plans and teaching strategies, or meet socially for support outside of the seminars.

The theoretical aspect introduces new knowledge and intellectual engagement, while practice helps Fellows to build skills in applying that knowledge. Presenters share best practices on effective teaching strategies and facilitate hands-on approaches to content development. Lastly, it is an important way for Fellows to have the opportunity to reflect upon their learning, be inspired and challenged, and strengthen their commitment to the field of teaching.

### Developing Professionals

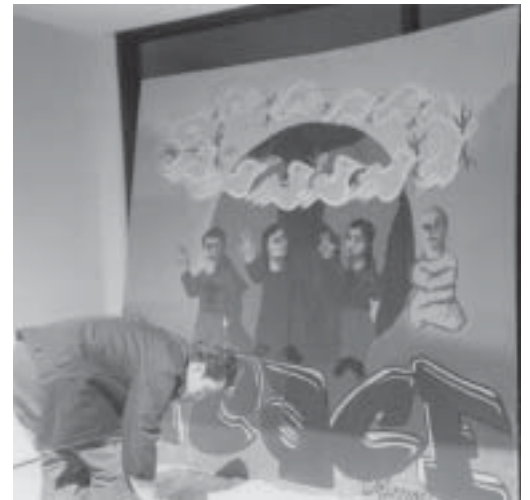
Furthermore, we strive to emphasize professionalism among our Fellows and encourage them to continue their development through research and collaborative projects. For example, through a grant acquired by the program, a group of Fellows, alumni and TEAMS Staff co-presented a service-learning workshop at the National Service Learning Conference in 2004, focusing on the outcomes of their Cesar Chavez-focused service-learning projects.

Alumni are also encouraged to stay connected to the program, to share their expertise, and mentor new Fellows. They are regularly invited to present workshops to current Fellows at pedagogical seminars, thus keeping them active participants in TEAMS and vital resources of support for Fellows as our network grows.

### Teacher Network

We consistently work to foster and strengthen connections among Fellows in their cohort community that extend into the TEAMS network to include past Fellows, mentor teachers, other teachers at schools where Fellows are placed, and other educators, administrators, politicians, parents, and community members who support TEAMS. We nurture this network through public forums, social





Activities from one of the Cesar Chavez Conferences on Service and Leadership at the University of San Francisco for middle and high school students in the San Francisco Bay Area, part of the TEAMS Cesar Chavez Leadership and Service Initiative.



—Photographs provided by Heather L. Hazuka

events, invitations to participate in Fellows' service-learning projects, an online community (including an area for sharing of curriculum and lesson plans, a job board, and chat room), and leadership development for network members by sharing their expertise at seminars.

Kate Shoemaker, an alumnus of the program, described the importance of the this network in this way:

TEAMS provided me with professional support during my first two years of teaching. I was overwhelmed when I entered my own classroom. Knowing I had TEAMS seminars to look forward to and compatriots with whom to consult made the tough times manageable. Now, I have a fantastic life-long network of professional resources.

### Hanging in for the Long Haul

Through innovative collaboration, an intentional focus on diversity and culturally responsive pedagogy, and a training design focused on providing teachers with the tools to be successful in urban public schools, we have created in TEAMS an

innovative model of teacher development and a strong network of dedicated teachers. However, the work does not stop there. We receive many more requests for support from Fellows than we have the capacity to provide. Many Fellows want the opportunity to observe other's classrooms, be mentored by a master teacher, and be able to see examples of great teaching in a high-stakes, highly scripted curriculum. Furthermore, as testing continues to be a focus of teacher credentialing, we will need to provide opportunities for our Fellows to be well prepared to pass those tests, as well as be able to afford them, while helping them not lose sight of the reason why they are in the profession: their students.

Everyone interested in the future of public schools must pay equal attention to the problems of teacher recruitment and retention. Vigorous efforts on teacher recruitment and development must continue if we are to produce enough qualified teachers to meet current and future needs. At the same time, teacher retention must also be addressed if the "revolving door" of recruitment and attrition is to be stopped

and well-prepared, critically-minded, and professionally-supported teachers will hang in for the long haul.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Borman, G. D., Stringfield, S., & Rachuba, L. (2000). *Advancing minority high achievement: National trends and promising practices*. New York: College Board.

<sup>2</sup> National Collaborative on Diversity in the Teaching Force. (2004). *Assessment of Diversity in America's Teaching Force: A Call to Action*. Washington, DC: Author.

## Call for Submissions for Special Issue of *Multicultural Education* on the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Education and Society

### Schools, Culture, and Trauma

*Call for Manuscripts:* The focus of this Special Issue is the gathering and sharing of information on Hurricane Katrina's effect on schools and educational institutions from the perspective of educational scholars and practitioners at all levels, with an emphasis on multicultural and diversity issues, specifically, the interaction of culture and trauma. Thus, in an attempt to identify and address the lessons learned from the devastating effects of Katrina on education and educational institutions, we invite contributions from multiple diversity issues and perspectives that may include, but not be limited to, race, class, and culture that surfaced from the response to Hurricane Katrina's aftermath and the rebuilding process. This Special Issue welcomes critical perspectives and is especially interested in articles from the multiple perspectives of administrators, counselors, teachers, and other higher education professionals that will provide insight into hidden issues of color, race, culture, and poverty that impact our public and higher education school systems' ability to be culturally responsive and sensitive to the students during a crisis. Authors are encouraged to share success stories or failures from which the readership can learn.

Submissions should be sent to Aretha F. Marbley, Douglas J. Simpson, & Alice Denham  
Via e-mail

(Send manuscript as an attachment in Microsoft Word. Include cover letter with author information in the body of the e-mail.)

Please address your e-mail submission to: aretha.marbley@ttu.edu  
with e-mail copies to doug.simpson@ttu.edu and denham719@aol.com

Deadline for submissions for this special issue is March 1, 2007

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